



**RANGER'S REPORT TO THE
PUKENUI/WESTERN HILLS FOREST
CHARITABLE TRUST
(September 2013)**



Northland Hospitality

As I write this Rangers Report, the sweet scent of decomposing possum and rat is gently wafting through the Ark-in-the-Park. Nearly twenty people turned up at our lockup last Monday, to pick up their gear and head off to do the long-planned poison drop, which went like a well-oiled machine, thanks primarily to Max Hutchings and his tireless team. The Trust also thanks the DOC team, environmental students from NorthTec, Chris (our trapper) plus our other regular volunteers. Congratulations to everyone for a job well done.

Still on the subject of predator control, the Trust thanks both DOC and the Northland Regional Council for gifting more traps and trap boxes. We are now getting very close to doubling our original stoat lines so that we can start thinking about making an application to release native species into the forest.

Further to which, things are progressing well with our Royal Society Scholar, Jane Norman. Jane, Ben Barr from NorthTec and myself went into Pukenui recently, to scope out some likely spots to put up rubber covers that provide a safe haven for our endangered geckos that we hope are still in the forest. These covers were generously paid for by the Royal Society and will be used over the coming years to see how well our predator control work is benefitting their numbers. In a couple of weeks, another specialist herpetologist will be coming up from Auckland to help with our work.

Our relationship with NorthTec continues to grow and I was invited to give a talk on our work in Pukenui Forest to a group of environmental students. One of the students is very keen on bats and he is interested in trying to find their roosting sites which, to date, have not been located!

I recently received a call from a developer, Mr Barry Reiher, who has purchased Ray Smith's farm that abuts Pukenui Forest. He plans to build a number of houses on the property and wishes to discuss our position re his plans...watch this space.

I met with Tracey Moore, planner with the WDC, to help finalise signage for the Maddren entrance on Russell Road and walkway entrances into Coronation Reserve. We were also given some very good, up to date, maps of the forest which were gratefully received.

This is Conservation Week and, if we get the numbers, the Trust will be taking the public on a walk through Pukenui Forest on the DOC Loop track. Max has very kindly offered to host the walk and he can show them our traps and weta box!

Following my meeting with Council prospect Greg Innes, I contacted Transpower to feel them out for a major sponsorship but was very quickly told we were out of luck. We keep our fingers tightly crossed for our ASB application.

Kauri Dieback education signs were given to us by DOC, and volunteer, Ian Buckley, has put them out at various entrances to the forest.

Finally, I will shortly have 50 car stickers featuring the Pukenui Trust to distribute and it will be a case of first-come-first-served.

Gerry Brackenbury
Ranger (Part-time)